

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 - 29 (cancelled).

1 30. (new) An absorbent sanitary article for
2 absorbing body fluids which comprises a matrix
3 containing metallic silver and a fiber having an outer
4 surface, characterized in that the silver is chemically
5 or physically attached exclusively to the surface and
6 cannot be flushed away from the fiber in use of the
7 sanitary article.

1 31. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 30, characterized in that the surface includes
3 depressions and the metallic silver is attached in the
4 depressions in the surface.

1 32. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 30, characterized in that the fiber is a
3 synthetic fiber.

1 33. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 32, characterized in that said synthetic fiber

3 is formed of a polymer selected from the group
4 consisting of polyamides, polyesters, polyacrylics,
5 elastanes and polychlorides.

6 34. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
7 to claim 33, characterized in that the synthetic fiber
8 is present in the form of a discrete fiber, a woven, a
9 non-woven or a thread, and said silver is present in
10 the form of bound particles from 1 to 30 nm in diameter
11 and in an amount equal to about 3% of the fiber weight.

1 35. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 30, characterized in that the fiber has a
3 silver content of not more than 3%.

1 36. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 30, characterized in that the silver content
3 of the fiber is just high enough to ensure that an
4 antimicrobial effect is detectable for not more than 24
5 hours on a first article surface of the sanitary
6 article intended for body contact.

1 37. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 30, characterized in that the metallic silver

3 is present in the form of bound particles from 1 to 30
4 nm in diameter.

1 38. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 37, characterized in that the metallic silver
3 is present in the form of bound particles from 1 to 10
4 nm in diameter.

1 39. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 38, characterized in that the metallic silver
3 is present in the form of bound particles from 1 to 6
4 nm in diameter.

5 40. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
6 to claim 30, characterized in that the metallic silver
7 fully surrounds the outer surface of the fiber.

1 41. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 30, characterized in that the sanitary article
3 contains at least one of a pulp and a superabsorbent.

1 42. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 30, characterized in that the sanitary article
3 is constructed as a disposable article.

1 43. (new) An absorbent article according to claim
2 30, characterized in that the sanitary article is
3 constructed as a diaper, a pants-type diaper, a
4 training pant, an incontinence pad, a feminine hygiene
5 article, a sanitary napkin, a panty liner or a tampon.

1 44. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 30, characterized in that the fiber is in the
3 form of discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-woven fibers
4 or threads in dispersed piecewise in the matrix.

1 45. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 30, characterized in that the fiber is in the
3 form of discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-woven fibers
4 or threads disposed within a layer of the sanitary
5 article.

1 46. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 45, characterized in that said sanitary
3 article includes a first article surface intended for
4 body contact and a second article surface not intended
5 for body contact, and the layer is disposed closer to
6 the first article surface.

1 47. (new) An absorbent sanitary article according
2 to claim 46, characterized in that the layer is closer
3 to the first article surface than to the mid-point
4 between the first article surface and the second
5 article surface.

1 48. (new) An absorbent sanitary article
2 according to claim 30, wherein the fiber is present in
3 the form of a discrete fiber, a woven, a non-woven or a
4 thread, and said silver is present in the form of bound
5 particles from 1 to 30 nm in diameter and in an amount
6 sufficient to ensure an antimicrobial effect detectable
7 for not more than 24 hours at a first body contact
8 surface of the sanitary article.

1 49. (new) A process for producing an absorbent
2 sanitary article for absorbing body fluids which
3 comprises a matrix containing metallic silver,
4 comprising the steps of disposing a fiber having an
5 outer surface in said matrix and binding said metallic
6 silver exclusively to said fiber surface.

1 50. (new) A process according to claim 49, wherein
2 the binding step includes applying silver to the fiber

3 surface by electro, chemical or electrochemical
4 deposition or by vapor deposition.

1 51. (new) A process according to claim 49 wherein
2 the silver is bound to the fiber by means of a chemical
3 or physical bond.

1 52. (new) A process according to claim 49, wherein
2 the fiber surface includes depressions and the metallic
3 silver is attached in the depressions in the surface.

1 53. (new) A process according claim 49, wherein
2 the surface of the fiber is mordanted prior to the
3 binding of the silver.

1 54. (new) A process according to claim 49, wherein
2 the fiber is a synthetic fiber.

1 55. (new) A process according to claim 49, wherein
2 the silver is applied at a weight of up to a 3% based
3 on the weight of the fiber.

1 56. (new) A process according to claim 49, wherein
2 the silver is only applied at a weight just high enough
3 to ensure that an antimicrobial effect is detectable

4 for not more than 24 hours on a first body contact
5 surface of the sanitary article.

1 57. (new) A process according to claim 49, wherein
2 the metallic silver is bound in the form of particles
3 from 1 to 30 nm in diameter.

1 58. (new) A process according to claim 49, wherein
2 the metallic silver is applied such that the outer
3 surface of the fiber is fully surrounded by silver.

1 59. (new) A process according to claim 49, wherein
2 at least one of a pulp and a superabsorbent is
3 incorporated in the sanitary article.

1 60. (new) A process according to claim 49,
2 characterized in that the fiber is in the form of
3 discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-woven fibers or
4 threads dispersed piecewise.

1 61. (new) A process according to claim 49,
2 characterized in that the fiber is in the form of
3 discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-woven fibers or
4 threads is disposed within a layer of the sanitary
5 article.

1 62. (new) A process according to claim 61,
2 characterized in that said sanitary article includes a
3 first article surface intended for body contact and a
4 second article surface not intended for body contact,
5 and the layer is disposed closer to the first surface.

1 63. (new) A process according to claim 62,
2 characterized in that the layer is closer to the first
3 article surface than to the mid-point between the first
4 article surface and the second article surface.